

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity

(NOFO): FY 2019 Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0005590

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.011

Key Date/Application Deadline: April 15, 2019

Program Description/Executive Summary: The U.S. Study Abroad Branch within the Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition to administer the FY 2019 Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program (hereinafter referred to as the “Gilman Program”). U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals for the purpose of administering a scholarship program for credit-bearing academic study or internships outside the United States by U.S. undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need. Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

A. Program Description:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose: The intent of the International Academic Opportunity Act, the authorizing legislation for the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, is to broaden the U.S. student population that participates in study abroad by focusing on those students who would not otherwise study outside the United States due to financial constraints. The Gilman Program provides scholarships to enable U.S. citizen or national undergraduate students of limited financial means to pursue credit-bearing academic studies or internships abroad. The Gilman Program helps to support the United States' national security and economic prosperity through the expansion of international opportunities for gifted American students without the financial means to further their

knowledge of other countries, languages, and cultures through in-person overseas experiences. The program also encourages American students to study or intern in diverse countries where fewer Americans study, showcasing America's rich diversity, culture, and values to a wider number of people in countries overseas and building connections and networks between young Americans and their peers around the world.

Goals of the Gilman Program:

- Develop a generation of future American leaders that represents the rich diversity of the nation and has the international networks and skills to advance U.S. national security and economic prosperity.
- Expand the U.S. student population that studies and interns abroad, helping more young Americans to gain the professional skills, language abilities, and knowledge of the world needed for successful careers.
- Broaden the destinations where U.S. students study and intern abroad, in order to build relationships, foster mutual understanding, and represent American culture and values, including in developing countries and countries critical to U.S. national security.

The Gilman Program provides merit-based scholarships of up to \$5,000 to eligible students to assist with the cost of up to one academic year of undergraduate study abroad. A limited number of supplemental Critical Need Language Awards of up to \$3,000 are also provided for the study of critical languages, including, but not limited to: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu.

ECA seeks to encourage participating U.S. students to choose diverse study abroad destinations; to study languages, especially critical languages; to engage in credit-bearing coursework from a broad range of disciplines; and to consider career-oriented internships overseas. ECA also seeks to support U.S. students of diverse backgrounds through the application process and throughout their program; to help underrepresented U.S. institutions offer and promote study abroad opportunities for their students; and to support and build networks among Gilman alumni. These objectives should be addressed in proposals.

Since its inception in 2001, the Gilman Program has awarded more than 28,000 scholarships to U.S. undergraduate students representing over 1,300 colleges and universities from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. territories for study in over 150 countries around the world.

Guidelines:

The Gilman Program supports academic study or international internships for four distinct cycles: academic year, fall semester, spring semester, and summer programs

overseas. The selected administering organization should propose an application cycle or cycles to best meet the needs of potential applicants and U.S. higher education institutions. The selected organization will be expected to conduct the following activities separately and/or collectively for each cycle as appropriate:

- Conduct a nationwide competition for participants with special emphasis on states, geographic areas, institutional types, and students underrepresented in study abroad;
- Develop and oversee application and selection processes for participants, with preference given to veterans of military service;
- Disburse scholarship payments to selected students for overseas study, including Critical Need Language Awards;
- Develop and manage virtual pre-departure and re-entry modules for participants;
- Monitor program participants to ensure their safety and security and provide communication and assistance throughout their time abroad, particularly during emergencies;
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the program's achievement of its stated goals;
- Support, monitor, and oversee the compulsory follow-on service projects;
- Provide and oversee virtual and in-person alumni outreach and engagement activities – including the implementation of the Gilman Alumni Ambassador Program;
- Organize and host an annual Alumni Ambassador orientation in Washington, DC;
- Conduct activities for other programs and initiatives covered under the International Academic Opportunity Act; and
- Provide regular reporting to ECA on the overall program and its specific program components, as well as ad-hoc reporting, as requested.

Student Eligibility:

To apply for a scholarship, an applicant must be:

- A citizen or national of the United States (permanent residents of the United States are not eligible);
- An undergraduate student in good standing at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States (including both two-year and four-year institutions);
- A verified recipient of Title IV federal financial funding, defined for the Gilman Program as a verified recipient of a federal Pell Grant, during the academic term of his/her application or while he/she will be abroad; and
- Accepted for or in the process of applying to a study abroad or internship program that meets the following criteria:
 - Is in a single country for a duration of at least two weeks for community college students and three weeks for students from four-year institutions.
 - Multi-country programs are eligible as long as students spend the minimum program length in at least one country.

- Takes place in a country or countries with a Level One or Level Two travel advisory, according to the U.S. Department of State, at the time of application.
- Be eligible for credit from the student's home institution.

Proof of program acceptance is required prior to award disbursement. Each scholar must also complete a compulsory follow-on service project within six months of their return to the United States. Projects should take place either in the home institution or community of the scholar and include an opportunity for the scholar to promote study abroad and the Gilman Program.

ECA reserves the right to modify the above eligibility requirements.

Recruitment and Outreach:

The proposal must include a detailed recruitment plan describing how the Gilman Program will be publicized to students, accredited U.S. institutions of higher education, and relevant organizations, through print and online media outlets, to reach the widest possible audience of qualified applicants. There should be an emphasis on reaching a diverse range of institutions and students across the United States, and the plan should include strategies for supporting faculty and administrators in providing front-line assistance to potential applicants. The applicant organization should also describe plans for their response to and management of a significant volume of queries and applications.

Following the application cycles, the administering organization will provide ECA with a list of recommended awardees, as directed, for ECA to approve the final selection of participants. The administering organization will also work closely with ECA to publicize the achievements of Gilman Scholars. The applicant organization should provide examples of successful social and traditional media outreach campaigns it has conducted in the past. Please refer to Project Objectives Goals and Implementation (POGI) guidelines for additional guidance.

Beyond recruitment, applicant organizations should propose creative and cost-effective outreach ideas to promote the Gilman Program and its impact to domestic and international stakeholders at large through such activities as conference participation, marketing campaigns, and special events.

Other notes: **All materials and correspondence related to this program must state that the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by <name of recipient organization>.** ECA will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute any materials developed for – or related to – this program.

Application Screening, Selection, and Awarding:

Applicant organizations must propose an online student application system. An alternate paper-based application should also be provided for candidates unable to apply online. These paper-based applications, however, must be entered into the online system by the administering organization program staff. All application materials should be available in a sortable, searchable, electronically accessible database format that can be easily shared with ECA upon request.

The proposed selection criteria and process should be clear and transparent to applicants, their institutions, and selection panelists and should include a scoring matrix. In ranking eligible applicants for scholarships, consideration should be given to academic excellence, financial need, diversity of the applicant pool, fields of study, proposed destination, plans for language study, and type and location of home institution. Preference should be given to applicants who are veterans of military service and to applicants with no previous study abroad experience.

Applicant organizations should propose a selection process that meets the criteria outlined above. ECA will approve the selection plan for candidates.

Fiscal Management and Disbursement of Funds:

Pending the availability of FY 2019 funds, it is anticipated that approximately \$12,500,000 will be awarded to cover costs of all program components described above and in the Project Objectives Goals and Implementation (POGI) guidelines. Proposals should reflect a conscious effort to keep administrative costs low in order to maximize the amount of funding dedicated to scholarship. Proposals should also describe how the applicant organization plans to ensure that individual scholarship amounts, including supplemental Critical Need Language Awards (CNLA), do not exceed the amount requested by the scholarship recipient. Implementing organizations should plan to disburse award amounts for grantees via direct deposits to participant bank accounts.

The FY 2019 Gilman Program award recipient should be prepared to work closely with the FY 2018 Gilman Program award recipient to maintain continuity of programming and operations for the FY 2019 program. This would include, but is not limited to, the maintenance and transfer of program, participant, and alumni data and contacts as needed for monitoring and reporting, including the required annual Gilman Congressional report.

Pre-departure and Re-entry Support:

Applicant organizations should propose a mechanism for offering at least one pre-departure and one re-entry on-line module. Modules may be offered for optional

academic credit. The pre-departure module should be designed to provide students with information relevant to ensuring a positive and constructive study abroad experience, which may include, but is not limited to, health (to include mental health) and safety information, an overview of cross-cultural communication, adaptation strategies (particularly for students representing underserved U.S. populations), and the role of citizen diplomats. The pre-departure module should also provide information on how to enroll in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), a requirement for all Gilman Scholars. Applicant organizations should detail how they will certify this requirement has been met. The re-entry module should include, but is not limited to, information on reverse culture shock, deconstructing positive and negative experiences, how to share your study abroad experience on your campus or in your community, career-readiness resources, and helping participants effectively articulate their study abroad experience to enhance their personal and professional development. Applicant organizations should also propose creative ideas on how to augment the information provided within these modules, as well as how these modules can be shared as a public service for Americans studying abroad writ large.

Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:

Applicant organizations should describe the systems they will use to confirm Gilman Scholars arrived in country on their approved programs and to help monitor and ensure the safety and security of Gilman Scholars abroad, including, but not limited to, rapid communication in emergency situations. ECA welcomes creative and cost-effective ways to engage Gilman Scholars while they are overseas. Proposals should also describe how the applicant organization will evaluate the program. Evaluation mechanisms should go beyond simply gathering anecdotal material and highlighting successful program participants following their return to the United States. The evaluation should provide detailed results and analysis of the effects of the student's study abroad experience, including impact on the host and home communities; language learning results for language-funded awards; the effects of the compulsory follow-on service project, particularly impact on the student's home campus and community; and other topics as necessary to measure the program's impact.

The administering organization will report on quantitative and qualitative results for each program facet, as determined by ECA. The administering organization shall also provide program information and data to be included in the program's required annual report to Congress. Additionally, ECA may request other periodic and ad hoc reports. These reports may include, but are not limited to, separate breakdowns for students studying in regions or countries of strategic interest, participant demographics (including by home state/ congressional district), award information, internship placements, and students studying critical languages.

Alumni Tracking and Engagement

Proposals must include a number of in-person and virtual alumni activities, as outlined in the POGI, that provide alumni with leadership and career-readiness training, build networks among all program alumni, and support the recruitment of future Gilman Scholars.

Summary

In a Cooperative Agreement, ECA/A/S/Q is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined in the attached POGI.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: 2019

Approximate Total Funding: \$12,500,000, pending the availability of FY 2019 funds

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Approximate Average Award: \$12,500,000, pending the availability of FY 2019 funds

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$12,500,000, pending the availability of FY 2019 funds

Anticipated Award Date: June 1, 2019, pending the availability of FY 2019 funds

Anticipated Project Completion Date: November 1, 2020

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this Cooperative Agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

C.) Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For

accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount \$12,500,000, pending the availability of FY 2019 funds, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI, and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

c.) Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

D.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package: Please contact Theresa Gagnon, U.S. Study Abroad Branch, ECA/A/S/Q, SA-5, 4th Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, tel. 202-632-6339 and fax 202-632-9479, GagnonTF@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Theresa Gagnon and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a Grant or Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

D.3b. Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM): All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award

is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

D.3d. Non-Profit Status: You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. FFATA Report: In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. Verifying Non-Profit Status: If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a Grant or Cooperative Agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.service-now.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State

award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY:

D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.

2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual

exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3n. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

1) **Administrative:** Salaries and benefits and other direct administrative expenses such as postage, phone, printing and office supplies.

2) **Program:** Participant scholarship expenses, which may include institutional fees, travel expenses, and tuition; and non-scholarship expenses, which may include expenses related to review panels, outreach, and alumni activities..

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Monday, April 15, 2019

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Search Grants” portion of the system.

D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the

official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3r. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau

regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

- 1. Quality of the Program Idea:** The proposal should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's priorities and mission.
- 2. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:** Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the applicant will meet the program's objectives and plans, while demonstrating innovation, productivity, and a commitment to academic excellence. The proposal should demonstrate a capacity for flexibility in the management of the program.
- 3. Follow-on/Alumni Activities:** Proposals should provide a strategy for maximizing the opportunities for alumni to further their study of the language and culture of the host country, presenting plans that are within the context of the grant (with Bureau support) and after its completion (without the Bureau's financial support). Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events. Proposals should provide a plan for continued contact with returnees to ensure that they are tracked over time, utilized and/or organized as alumni, and provided opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and skills they acquired on the exchange and share them with others. Please refer to the POGI for additional guidance on alumni outreach and follow-on engagement.
- 4. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's goals. The applicant should demonstrate well-established links to the scholarly and professional community in the U.S. and knowledge of foreign countries' educational environments as they apply to academic and professional exchange programs. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for any past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Grants Division.

The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

5. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible to maximize scholarship opportunities. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

6. Support of Diversity: The proposal should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity, as outlined in section D.3i. The proposal should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration, design, content, and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection, and destination. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan that outlines strategies for engaging students from diverse institutions, backgrounds, and geographies and does not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

7. Project Evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the success of activities, both as they unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other tool plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Award Notices: Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

F.2 OMB and Other Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>
<https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#). SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). For assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Help Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for US callers) or through the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted

to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

- 4) Other ad hoc reports as requested. These reports may include, but are not limited to, separate breakdowns for students studying in regions or countries of strategic interest, participant demographics (including home state/ voting district), award information, internship placements, and students studying critical languages.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.4. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Theresa Gagnon, U.S. Study Abroad Branch, ECA/A/S/Q, SA-5, 4th Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, tel. 202-632-6339 and fax 202-632-9479, GagnonTF@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Marie Royce
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

February 11, 2019